UNITED
NATIONS

E

Economic and Social
Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/CN.4/1996/110/Add.1
11 March 1996

ENGLISH ONLY

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Fifty-second session
Item 20 of the provisional agenda

RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

Impact of armed conflict on children

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum

Annexes

1. The present document contains the annexes to the report of the Secretary-General on the study on the impact of armed conflict on children.

2. The annexes are: I. Statement of the First Regional Consultation on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Children in the Horn, Eastern, Central and Southern Africa (Addis Ababa, 17-19 April 1995); II. Statement of the Second Regional Consultation on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Children in the Arab Region (Cairo, August 1995); III. Statement of the Third Regional Consultation on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Children in West and Central Africa (Abidjan, 7-10 November 1995); and IV. Statement adopted by the World Conference on Religion and Peace: children and violent conflict.

GE.96-10841 (E)

Annex I

STATEMENT OF THE FIRST REGIONAL CONSULTATION ON THE IMPACT OF ARMED CONFLICT ON CHILDREN IN THE HORN, EASTERN, CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN AFRICA

A threat haunts Africa - a threat challenging the stability of civil society. Liberia, Somalia and Rwanda have shockingly exposed Africa's failure to resolve its conflicts and its humanitarian tragedies. A crisis of national identity, persistent social injustice and a lack of sustained democratic processes have combined to create these tragedies. Social injustice, partly a product of bad governance, results in ethnic tension. Political leaders who lose authority exploit these ethnic tensions to maintain power, leading to more conflict.

When armed conflicts occur, children and women are the principal victims. Children are killed, maimed, orphaned or separated from their families; boys are forced to bear arms and commit violent acts themselves. Girls and women are exploited and sexually abused. It is children and women who suffer the most when schools are closed, clinics destroyed, fields sown with land-mines, and markets virtually bereft of goods. Those who survive the killing fields may die later for lack of food, water or basic medicines. Those who survive even this - but witness killing, maiming, burning and looting or experience lengthy separations from their families - may be traumatized for years to come.

Too many of Africa's children and women have experienced the horrors of total war, where combatants use weapons indiscriminately to terrorize civilians, impose their will and achieve their selfish ends, where accidental distinctions of race, class, or ethnicity are cynically manipulated to determine who will live and who will die. In some of these wars, neutrality is not an option. Every man, woman and child is forced to take a side; every man, woman and child is assigned to a particular group - to be protected or to be destroyed. Youth, age, and disability are no defence. Every person is equally at risk and equally terrorized. This nightmarish terror, more than any other force, has transformed the lives of African children and women.

Recognizing that this terror exists - not only in Africa but elsewhere in the world as well - the United Nations General Assembly in December 1993 unanimously called on the Secretary-General to appoint an expert to conduct a study on the impact of armed conflict on children. The Secretary-General appointed Ms. Graça Machel, former first lady and Minister of Education in Mozambique, to conduct the study. The following remarks are some of the reflections of participants meeting in Addis Ababa at the first of six planned regional consultations for this study. The participants, who attended the consultation in their personal capacities, came from 15 countries in eastern, central and southern Africa as well as other African countries. Many participants are associated with NGOs, the United Nations, and other African, international and intergovernmental organizations. Eleven of the 15 countries represented are now undergoing armed conflict or post-conflict reconstruction. Others border countries experiencing conflict and are struggling both to protect refugees and to attract sufficient assistance to support development, relief and rehabilitation.

Of course, not every African country has experienced the widespread destruction seen most recently in Rwanda. These recent catastrophes have obscured several positive developments across Africa, including the spread of meaningful democracy, increased respect for human rights, and remarkable successes in conflict resolution. In particular, southern African countries have recently taken responsibility for conflict situations in their midst and West African countries, through the monitoring observer group of the Economic Community of West African States, have successfully deployed African peace-keepers in the wounded country of Liberia. In addition, recent peace-making initiatives from the Organization of African Unity (OAU) are welcome and worthy of support.

Reflecting on recent armed conflicts in Africa, participants in the consultation affirmed their respect for sovereignty, but noted too that sovereignty implies a responsibility to protect the rights of the people. It was observed that, in those cases where Governments are unable or unwilling to protect the rights of their people, sovereignty should not be invoked to prevent the international community from protecting the rights or meeting the needs of children and other victims of conflict.

Participants also affirmed the responsibility of African Governments and the international community to protect children everywhere from the impact of armed conflict. They observed that total war - where most of the casualties are children and women - runs contrary to all basic human values and to all international standards aiming to protect civilians in situations of armed conflict, such as the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The participants noted an urgent need to renew basic human values and to enforce international standards which, through ignorance or wilful disregard, are too often flouted. They also stated that international standards should be strengthened to clarify the humanitarian responsibilities of all parties to a conflict and to address situations not clearly foreseen when they were initially drafted.

Participants emphasized the critical advocacy role which schools and the media could play in renewing basic values and in reducing the number and severity of armed conflicts. Some participants stated that the media often inflamed, but rarely tried to extinguish, controversies that might lead to armed conflict. Other participants noted that continued schooling - especially when some classes focus on basic human rights and values - helps to stabilize local communities, to normalize the lives of school-going children and their families, and to protect children from the possible irrevocable loss of their hopes and aspirations.

Reflecting on international responses to Africa's armed conflicts, some participants expressed disappointment in the role of the United Nations. That disappointment took several forms. It was felt that the United Nations on occasion intervened too late; that the United Nations when it did intervene was often confused about its mandate and limited in its resources; that United Nations forces did not always perform at the highest standards of conduct; and that the United Nations failed to address adequately the vexing dilemma of the limits of sovereignty, especially in extreme cases of gross violation of human rights. While participants acknowledged that these were

very complex issues, influenced by the widely varying views of Member States, they none the less felt that more must be expected of the United Nations and insisted that the study address these issues in a thoughtful and searching way. In particular, it was pointed out that the United Nations should seek self-critically and constructively to examine its shortcomings and failures with a view to ensuring that the Organization is fully relevant and effective. At the same time, other participants noted the indispensable and constructive role played by the United Nations in the transition to peace and democracy in Africa, particularly in South Africa, Namibia, Mozambique and Angola.

The participants noted that Africans and the international community must and can do better. They observed that children offer both the reason and the opportunity to take firm measures. In a world divided by race, language, politics and religion, children are a unifying force that brings all people together on a common ethical ground. The needs of all children are the same - nutritious food, adequate health care, a decent education, a secure and loving family, and a life of friendship and opportunity. Children's needs and aspirations cut across all ideologies. To secure these needs, some participants urged that all parties to a conflict be strongly encouraged to recognize children as a "zone of peace". This would impose on the parties an absolute obligation to protect children from the corrupting influences of war and militarization.

As part of their own efforts to protect the rights of children in armed conflicts, participants made the following recommendations, among others, knowing well the formidable constraints facing progress in Africa today:

Because wars have a profound impact on civilians, especially children and women, Africans must unequivocally renounce armed conflict as a means for resolving social, economic and political problems by:

- Recognizing clearly, in light of the World Summit for Social Development, that the concept of human security should replace the traditional concept of military security;

- Persuading Governments to reduce military spending and to redirect investment towards human security and human development;

- Strengthening mechanisms for achieving national reconciliation as well as conflict prevention and conflict resolution, especially by including eminent African women in peace-keeping efforts; and

- Persuading donors to recognize international obligations.

Africans must recognize their absolute obligation to prevent the involvement of children in situations of armed conflict.

In this context, all warring parties must:

- Stop recruiting children or otherwise using children to achieve military objectives;

- Immediately demobilize child soldiers and, with assistance from the international community, achieve their rehabilitation and integration into normal life, primarily through resuming their education;

- Protect non-combatants, and especially children and women, in combat theatres; and

- Exclude agricultural land and traditional sanctuaries such as schools, hospitals and cultural and religious institutions from among military targets.

African countries and the international community must recognize their absolute obligation to protect and to meet the needs of children and women who are affected by armed conflict.

In this context, African countries with the support of the international community must:

- Educate children about land-mines, and in particular educate girls whose traditional labours (fetching water and firewood) expose them to a greater risk of injury from land-mines;

- Normalize the child's environment, and where necessary promote physical and psychosocial recovery, through schooling, peer group activities and appropriate health measures from the child's own culture;

- Expand the concept of humanitarian assistance to include the protection of civilians and civilian institutions, and to recognize as legitimate assistance to all civilians on any side of a conflict;

- Provide access and all necessary assistance to refugees and to host populations and host countries that are heavily burdened by the refugees' presence in their midst;

- Enable families to resume primary responsibility to care for, protect and rehabilitate children affected by armed conflict;

- Limit the institutionalization of children and support family reunification programmes for children separated from their families;

- Ban arms and combatants from refugee camps and other sanctuaries;

- Protect girls and women from rape, abuse and other violence; and

- Secure due process for the early rehabilitation of child prisoners and child perpetrators of violence.

Africans and the international community must restore basic human values and standards where they have been compromised by:

- Rejuvenating a sense of personal responsibility and respect for human life;

- Providing peace education to children and adults (especially community and national leaders);

- Educating aid workers and peace-keepers about international standards such as the Geneva Conventions and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to ensure that their activities accord with these standards; and

- Training human rights monitors and using truth commissions and war crimes trials to expose wrongdoing and to reinforce personal accountability.

Existing national and international standards protecting children in situations of armed conflict must be effectively strengthened and enforced.

In this context, all African countries should start to implement the Convention on the Rights of the Child by translating it into national law and creating credible structures to enforce it. In addition, all parties to a conflict - governmental and non-governmental - must:

- Be encouraged formally to declare that they consider themselves bound by, and will respect and ensure respect for, the provisions of the Geneva Conventions and other international instruments relating to the rights, welfare and protection of children, particularly in situations of armed conflict;

- Educate persons about the content of these documents, e.g. by simplified restatement, translation into local languages, and widespread dissemination;

- Create credible structures for punishing violators of these standards;

- Call for a United Nations declaration based on the principle of children as a "zone of peace" that would allow humanitarian assistance to safeguard the interests of children through, e.g. "corridors of peace" and "days of tranquillity";

- Make judicious use of the principle of humanitarian intervention in situations where the State is no longer willing or able to prevent grotesque abuses of human rights;

- Support the project of drafting an optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child to raise the age of recruitment into armed forces;

- Implement the recommendations of the April 1992 Humanitarian Summit, which recognized the access rights of civilians in war and the need for schools and protective zones for civilian populations during war; and

- Make better use of the media, NGOs, the OAU, the United Nations bodies, the International Court of Justice and similar forums to expose and monitor human rights abuses and to influence public opinion.

Political accountability needs to be vigorously promoted and observed by:

- Clarifying who is accountable for any action undertaken and establishing mechanisms to ensure accountability, especially for those who violate the rights of children; and

- Establishing transparent processes empowering people, especially children and women, to participate in political decisions and to play an active role in conflict prevention and management.

African countries should strengthen efforts to seek collective solutions to their problems by:

- Accepting primary responsibility in responding to future peace-keeping needs in Africa, with appropriate support from the international community;

- Strengthening their capacities to perform peace-keeping functions in addition to deploying peace-keeping soldiers (where African countries already play a significant role);

- Making full and effective use of the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution and other existing subregional forums for cooperation in Africa;

- Collecting and reflecting on the lessons learned in subregional peace-keeping efforts; and

- Harmonizing efforts to facilitate humanitarian intervention and peaceful neighbourly cooperation, chiefly through involving civic leaders, NGOs, professional bodies, cultural and religious organizations, and others in conflict prevention and resolution.

Significant progress must be made to reduce arms shipments to Africa and arms trade within Africa by:

- Banning the shipment of arms (including land-mines) to all parties to any armed conflict and creating mechanisms to enforce the ban;

- Banning the production, sale and use of land-mines and creating an international supervisory body to monitor the ban;

- Challenging government spending for military purposes in the meetings of the OAU, the United Nations and other forums;

- Encouraging the flow of additional external financing to Governments who pledge to spend these funds for non-military purposes; and

- Making determined efforts to assist African countries in the removal of land-mines.

Annex II

STATEMENT OF THE SECOND REGIONAL CONSULTATION ON THE IMPACT OF ARMED CONFLICT ON CHILDREN IN THE ARAB REGION

The Arab region suffers chronic violence that results from various domestic, regional and international causes, including, most notably, the Arab-Israeli conflict and ideological tensions. At least half of the 21 States in the Arab League have recently experienced or continue to experience some form of armed conflict. Other forms of violence suffered by the region include internal strife, prolonged military occupations, economic and political deprivation, severe social inequity, and cultural and political alienation. Recent estimates revealed that at least 2 million Arab children are refugees, and nearly 4 million are displaced. Some Arab countries have experienced uninterrupted wars or civil conflicts lasting more than a decade, making violence a part of their daily lives.

Arab children have paid dearly for the violence they suffer, in terms of death, injury, disability, abuse, torture, psychological trauma, imprisonment, recruitment into armed forces, and separation from their families. They have also paid a very high price indirectly, because resources spent on warfare deprive children of developmental rights and opportunities in health, education, social welfare and basic human needs. Armed conflict, socio-economic disparity and political injustice in the Arab region have been woven into a harsh cycle. Human despair and want often fuel warfare, which in turn aggravates human despair, leading to ever more bitter and chronic warfare. The Cairo Consultation declared that this situation was unfair, unnecessary, and unacceptable, and that its root causes and symptoms have to be treated in all of their dimensions: political, economic, social, psychological, moral, and spiritual, at the local, regional and global levels.

Most Arab individuals and States look at the issues of peace and justice as being intertwined and inseparable. The Consultation recognized that the very concept of peace is often controversial in the Arab region, because peace often refers merely to the absence of war, is sometimes imposed for the purposes of others, and is not always perceived to be just.

All the sessions considered the following cross-cutting themes: the moral and human rights of children caught in conflicts, including their right to unimpaired humanitarian assistance and psychological recovery, especially in the context of the Convention on the Rights of the Child; longer-term preventive measures to reduce the incidence of armed conflict, and to promote justice, tolerance and peace; the rich legacy of the Arab region in protecting children from the scourge of conflict and preventing conflict by tapping indigenous traditions of multicultural existence and pluralism; and practical proposals on how to bring about changes in people's values, attitudes and behaviour, so as to minimize the incidence of conflict and the suffering of children.

The Cairo Consultation recommended two general actions that cut across the sectoral issues discussed in the different sessions:

- UNICEF, ESCWA and other appropriate partners in the Arab region should document Arab experiences and lessons in protecting children in conflict situations, with a view to providing a platform for future Arab initiatives and allowing others throughout the world to share Arab experiences and lessons.

- Governments, NGOs and other interested parties in the Arab region, working with UNICEF and ESCWA, should formulate a plan of action, including immediate, medium-term and long-term measures to protect children who suffer violence or conflict situations, within the wider framework of full implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

1. Children as zones of peace: discussion

In the session on children as zones of peace it was noted that the number of conflicts is increasing worldwide. Nearly 90 per cent of war casualties today are suffered by civilians, most of whom are women and children. Consequently, the world is witnessing a steady increase in child deaths, injuries and suffering, which is aggravated by the increasing targeting of children and other civilians, and the conscription into warfare of children below the age of 15 years.

The Consultation emphasized the aim of working for the absolute and comprehensive protection of all children in situations of conflict: children should never be allowed to play an active role in warfare, and they must be offered immediate protection and assistance when a conflict erupts.

The Consultation noted that the ideal - the prevention of war - requires addressing and eliminating the root causes of conflict; this in turn challenges the people of the region to work for lasting and sustainable peace, based on justice, social development and human equity as well as economic progress. Participatory, accountable and democratic governance systems are more likely than autocratic systems to value and to promote human rights and human development, and thus can better promote domestic peace and regional stability. It was also recognized that emergency assistance would continue to be necessary to alleviate suffering during conflicts, but that medium- and long-term reforms must be promoted simultaneously to protect children from conflict.

The issue of sanctions in the Arab region was discussed at some length, given that several Arab and other Middle Eastern States suffer from international sanctions. United Nations or unilateral sanctions were thought to be ineffective, and to cause great hardship to children and women. They were also widely seen to have been applied in an inconsistent manner that undermined the credibility of the United Nations, often prompting some United Nations agencies to deliver emergency assistance to people suffering from sanctions imposed by other United Nations bodies.

Children generate compassion among all people, and therefore it is possible to mobilize nationally and globally for the sake of children as zones of peace. Zones of peace can include cease-fires, corridors of peace, days of tranquillity, zones without conflict, and other means of shielding children from warfare and/or assuring their continued access to essential human services during a conflict situation. The Consultation urged sensitivity to regional cultural traditions, national experiences, and political or psychological attitudes when advocating for child rights, in order to achieve maximum credibility and results.

The work of national and international NGOs was recognized as very important for implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and should be strengthened whenever possible. One way of doing this is to encourage the participation of children and youth in promoting compliance with the provisions of the Convention and in other aspects of increasing compliance with child rights statutes, at international, national and local levels.

Some ideas deemed worthy of further study included: sending child rights monitors to conflict zones, improving dissemination of information about the Convention on the Rights of the Child and integrating provisions of the Convention into country-level programmes by Governments, United Nations agencies and NGOs.

1.1 Children as zones of peace: recommendations

- National Governments, international organizations, NGOs and the media are asked to work together more effectively to designate aggression against children, including hindering delivery of humanitarian aid, as a crime against humanity. An essential first step to this end is to monitor the actions of warring parties, publicly identify aggressors who knowingly harm or victimize children in a conflict situation, and subject them to existing legal bodies and sanctions.

- Develop more effective monitoring and surveillance systems to enforce existing humanitarian law and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

- Promote a broad global coalition and commitment to children as zones of peace in conflict situations.

- Successful interventions to protect children in conflict situations should be publicized and recognized, in order to expand application of the concept of children as zones of peace.

- National and international bodies assisting or protecting children in times of war must cooperate and coordinate more effectively to shield children from the impact of war, especially by using cease-fires to strengthen the coping mechanisms of war-afflicted communities.

- Expand the concept of children as zones of peace to include women and other civilians in war, and to offer long-term protection measures for children who are not in conflict situations.

- Launch efforts to expand the Convention on the Rights of the Child from a formal, legal agreement among States to a broad moral platform for global protection of children, women and all civilians suffering from conflicts or other situations of need.

- Hold responsible for their actions perpetrators of violence against children, whether in conflict or non-conflict situations, even years after the violence has ended, because children themselves suffer the negative consequences of violence for a very long time, sometimes permanently.

- Amend article 38 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child to raise the age of recruitment in armies from 15 to 18 years.

- Advocate a global ban on the manufacture of anti-personnel mines, by legally banning their production and by publicly naming the mines' manufacturers and lobbying in their countries.

- Press Governments and militias not to recruit or accept child soldiers. Raise the minimum age of combatants from 15 to 18 years, enforce the existing minimum age provision more strictly, promote a range of positive, suitable alternatives and incentives, including education and employment, in order to discourage the recruitment of child soldiers, and refine skills and methods for their demobilization so that the violence-prone attitudes of soldiers are not transposed into civil society after wars end.

- Capitalize on global events such as the 1996 Olympic Games to call for suspension of conflicts. Organize parallel global events that would draw attention to the suffering of children and civilians in war and the right of all children to be protected from such suffering.

- The United Nations and the international community are urged to stop enforcing economic sanctions against countries, owing to the sanctions' adverse impact on the lives of children. These sanctions contradict the basic concept of children as zones of peace and also detract from the United Nations credibility in the Arab region, and consequently impede its efforts to promote compliance with the concept of children as zones of peace and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

- All Governments are asked to offer obligatory courses to all their police, soldiers and security personnel on humanitarian law and dealing with children in conflict situations.

2. <u>Women as active agents for peace: discussion</u>

The role of women in conflict situations as active agents for peace was analysed, taking into consideration that Arab women's movements are sometimes portrayed as having a Western orientation and approach, which prevents them from addressing the immediate and critical needs of Arab women. This renders the discussion on the role of women in peace-making a very sensitive topic. Two case-studies presented at the Consultation reviewed the achievements of women's NGOs in promoting peace and in resistance movements in Lebanon and

Palestine, highlighting women's multiple roles as activists, mothers, community leaders, professionals, widows, and breadwinners. A third presentation highlighted the social, historical and political constraints on women's active participation in the public sphere in the Arab region.

The participants also observed that women in the Arab world have faced legal, cultural and social constraints to participation. This has determined the context of the women's human rights agenda in the Arab region, and also constrained the capacity of Arab women to play an effective role in promoting peace and development and in protecting children in times of war.

The Consultation assessed violations of women's rights in the Arab region and the impact of armed conflict on women and girls, including structural violence, internal displacement, rape, access to land and property rights, security, the right to nationality, sexual violence, and increase of female heads of households. The participants reviewed structural and other forms of violence not classified as armed conflict that affect women in Arab societies, including boycotts and curfews, poverty, anti-women propaganda, child labour, gender and domestic violence, and the linkages between public violence and domestic violence.

Women's rights were discussed within the context of economic and political crises in oppressed societies and the Arab region. Prevailing attitudes in the Arab region towards women's activism were debated, including the perception of Arab feminism as an offshoot of a Western phenomenon that can only lead to the disintegration of Arab society and family, and the tendency by some to blame women and the struggle for their rights for "corrupting" Muslim societies. The participants emphasized the difficulty of organizing around women's rights in the Arab region due to the political, historical and cultural context of women's status, as well as contradictions in the Arab region between women's legal and actual status. The Consultation also discussed how political manipulation can affect women in the Arab region.

It was pointed out that girls and women usually do not have the same access as boys and men to education and other resources, and that their roles and responsibilities are portrayed stereotypically in the media and in curricula. The role of men in the family context and as perpetrators of conflict and violence was also discussed, and the need to create an environment for attitudinal changes regarding the role and rights of women and girls was affirmed.

2.1 Women as active agents of peace: recommendations

- Arab Governments, NGOs and other relevant parties are urged to strictly enforce international humanitarian law that protects all children, irrespective of their gender, and promotes gender equality, particularly the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. In particular, Arab States that have not done so are urged to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Women's Convention, and all States are urged to ensure that domestic legislation conforms with the provisions of the Conventions. Arab States are also urged to ensure women's full rights

by removing any contradictions or gaps between international laws and constitutional guarantees of equal rights for men and women, on the one hand, and existing legal discrimination between men and women, on the other.

- Governments, national NGOs and international organizations are urged to increase their advocacy for women's human rights and to support and strengthen women's institutions and organizational efforts at the local, national and international levels. Such efforts should include the use of mass media and other community communication channels, perhaps also including international broadcasting services for women and children. They should impact on the full range of women's needs, rights, potentialities and aspirations, including areas such as democratization, economic development, peace-making, conflict resolution and prevention, sustainable human development and child survival. There is also a need to encourage attitudinal change among men and women; to create opportunities for the advancement of women and girls in non-traditional roles and professions; to support national and regional NGOs which sensitize their communities to gender issues by drawing upon cultural and religious values to give cultural legitimacy to their cause.

- There is a need to increase resources to women in order to support their additional caretaking responsibilities resulting from armed conflict; this can be done through the provision of services, loans and credit, and the promotion of women's economic empowerment. Special support should be given to households headed by women in displaced communities.

- The nature and consequences of violence against women, including sexual violence, should be documented and highlighted, as well as the linkages between warfare, a culture of violence, domestic violence, and sexual violence against women and children.

- Rape should be condemned as an act of violence and preventive and remedial action should be taken to protect all women and girls against sexual violence.

- Rape of women and girls in wartime should be designated as a war crime and measures should be taken to ensure that perpetrators of rape crimes are brought to trial as criminals of war.

- Gender analysis should be used to look at the differential impact of armed conflict on men and women, in order to design effective responses for the protection and care of families. The physical, social, and psychological impact of war on women should be studied and given increased attention.

3. Community-based approaches to psychological recovery and social reintegration: discussion

Reviewing Arab experiences in social and psychological recovery during and after armed conflict, the participants noted the importance of looking at recovery and reintegration of children in a holistic manner that includes all

aspects of the wider community and its values. Recovery and reintegration of children who have suffered violence require the full participation of the community and all of its material, human and moral assets.

The participants emphasized the critical role of the family and the community in psychological rehabilitation, especially owing to the communal nature of Arab culture, in which extended families and tribal networks provide significant support in times of need. All participants agreed that basic education is a critical means of recovery, and noted the close relationship between basic education and peace education. They also stressed the importance of training a range of specialists and other community members for increasing society's ability to provide families with techniques that can help them to cope better in conflict situations. The importance of play for children recovering from war trauma was also touched upon. The participants stressed the importance of providing some normalcy for children who undergo situations of violence. The critical importance of quick intervention was recognized. Time heals, but time heals more quickly if interventions start as soon as possible after the onset of a conflict.

The situation of children in Yemen suggested a need for greater sensitivity to local cultural particularities in devising interventions for psychological adjustment and care in war situations. The situation of children in Gaza pointed out how children can have both positive and negative perceptions of practitioners of violence and extremism on both sides of a conflict, and how such perceptions can have a lasting impact on children. The participants raised the question of the consequences of violence on the aggressor as well as on the victim. Research work in Lebanon highlighted the very high rates of trauma, depression, stress and other psychological ailments due to war. In some countries such as Palestine and Lebanon, an entire generation has lost its childhood to war, and reintegrating this generation into normal civil society will be a major challenge. Discussion also dealt with the need to formulate different rehabilitation programmes to cater for different trauma situations. It was pointed out that the way to approach child soldiers might differ from the way in which children who have been living under the stress of war for a long time are approached.

3.1 Community-based approaches: recommendations

- The comprehensive and complete recovery, rehabilitation and care of traumatized children should be affirmed as a basic right of all children, in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Comprehensive and complete recovery should include physical, psychological, social, nutritional, educational and other aspects of a child's well-being.

- Governments, NGOs, and specialized professionals and international bodies are requested to develop training and information modules comprising simple, easy-to-apply techniques for community-based psychological and physical recovery and social reintegration of children impacted by war. The use of such modules by various institutions in society, such as the mass media or religious groups, should be promoted so as to reach families with effective information that can be easily applied.

- There is a need to expand training programmes for teachers, social workers, health personnel, parents, and others in the community with whom children come into contact on a daily basis, in order to increase society's capacity to cope with the complete rehabilitation and reintegration of children.

- Emergency humanitarian assistance should be expanded to include: basic education as a fundamental human need, and "psychological first aid" for children in conflict situations, so that they can start recovering even at the onset of an emergency situation.

4. Education for tolerance and global education: discussion

The education of a child far transcends formal schooling, because a child's values and attitudes are formed by contacts outside school, with the family, peers, the community, the media, the religious establishments, the Government and others. The participants emphasized that working for social justice, tolerance and peace is highly skilled and demanding work that requires training and professionalism. It was suggested that healers and reconciliators be recruited and mobilized from the ranks of educators and others in society to promote justice and peace among the young of our societies.

The participants reviewed examples of community and national summer camps and other interventions that have helped to promote dialogue, healing, forgiveness, reconciliation and peace. They noted the need for further work to explore how such positive efforts could be expanded to involve society as a whole. The notion of peace needs to be defined around human development in its broadest sense. The importance of social tolerance and inner peace was emphasized as a prerequisite for political peace, both within States and between States. It was also agreed that genuine, sustainable peace can occur more quickly in societies that enjoy social justice, human dignity and participatory decision-making than in societies characterized by autocracy, inequity and economic disparity.

The quality, relevance and content of formal basic education were discussed and were found to be lacking throughout the Arab world. The participants agreed that there is an urgent need to replace rote learning with critical, analytical thinking and more open debate. This would help develop children's positive social skills, attitudes and values. The key to quality education lies in the quality of teachers. This can often compensate for deficiencies in curricula, buildings and other educational resources. Cooperative rather than competitive learning is also an important ingredient for promoting such values as tolerance and interdependence.

Discussions also dealt with education methodologies that attempt to instil values of tolerance, justice, gender equity, interdependence, self-awareness, non-violent conflict resolution, and environmental protection, such as peace education, education for development, and global education. It was noted that these programmes need to be defined clearly, and consensus was gained on the necessity of targeting quality education. Some of these programmes are already in the process of implementation in some Arab

countries: global education in Lebanon and Jordan and education for peace in Egypt. It was emphasized that the content of these programmes should be carefully designed by Arab educators to respond to indigenous needs, aspirations and experiences. It was also suggested that relevant NGOs be involved in decision-making processes concerning changes in national curricula.

4.1 Education for tolerance/global education: recommendations

- Governments, educators and other concerned parties are urged:
  - to continue to advocate strongly for improving the content and quality of education, especially basic education;
  - to ensure that education is firmly rooted in the traditional and national values of the country in question, and the broader values of the Arab region;
  - to promote and circulate such universal human values as tolerance, justice, gender equity, interdependence, self-awareness, environmental protection, and other life skills that can help promote the prevention and resolution of conflict, the enhancement of peace and stability, and the well-being of the Arab community and of humankind as a whole;
  - to promote further improvements in teacher quality, curricular reform, and educational methodologies which are conducive to critical thinking, creativity, dialogue, and other constructive values and skills, as defined through the local culture's experiences and values.
- Governments, educators, NGOs and concerned international bodies are asked to affirm that formal, non-formal and informal education interventions delivered through a variety of community channels form an essential part of children's learning experience, and that these should be accessible to children in situations of conflict.
- Parents and youth, along with experts and practitioners, should be given more opportunity to play an active role in contributing to the design, content and implementation of curricula and educational methodologies, especially those designed to instil moral values and attitudinal change.
- Governments and practitioners are urged to ensure transparency and public debate in all aspects of educational planning, including the selection of content and the assessment and implementation of learning.
- NGOs should take part in monitoring and assessing the revision of curricula.
- All Arab countries, without exceptions, are urged to promote the common values of tolerance and mutual respect.

5. The role of media and social communication channels in situations of armed conflict and violence: discussion

Media and community communication channels in the Arab world only occasionally highlight the rights of children in conflicts or violent situations. At the same time, however, Arab society has been a world leader in mobilizing communities to improve the health and well-being of children. This indicates a need to explore more carefully how informal and formal Arab communication channels can mobilize society for the well-being and protection of children. The media are also important to the well-being of children because of the many ways in which they impact on the character and values of children. The ongoing modernization, liberalization and fragmentation of many contemporary Arab societies suggest the need to use multiple channels to reach different audiences.

The mass media are a tool for education and value-formation among youth, and as such they should be recognized and used constructively. In peacetime, it was noted, the media project a considerable amount of violence onto the minds of children, but they can also be used to help children develop the critical thinking they need to be able to cope with the violence they encounter in their daily lives. In war and peace situations, the media could constructively play a double role: promoting conflict resolution through peaceful means, and preventing conflict through programmes which promote tolerance and peaceful coexistence.

It was noted that national and international media have not sufficiently pointed out obvious violations of international humanitarian law in conflicts in the Arab region, and indeed have often taken sides. The mass media cannot end warfare, but if informed, professional and activist they can help to expand compliance with humanitarian laws in order to reduce the suffering of children and other civilians caught in war situations. Arab, Western and international media professionals selectively choose the nature and tone of their coverage of important issues, usually on the basis of their ideological or commercial interests. The example of child soldiers and their treatment in Arab and global media - whether vilified or admired - shows how such selectivity operates.

The media's dominance by commercial entertainment and political ideologies makes it difficult to use them to advocate for children. The advent of the satellite-based commercial media market, which is beyond the control of Governments, requires creative and diligent research efforts to develop new means of using these systems to reach families with information that can promote the well-being and protection of children. It was agreed that such use of the media must be undertaken with deep cultural sensitivity to local values, experiences and aspirations.

It is impossible to separate media coverage of child rights issues from the wider social, economic and political context of Third World societies; similarly, it is hard to differentiate between the exploitation of children in times of war or peace, for in both cases economically stressed families find their children gravitating towards labour markets or armies/militias.

Arab-owned media in the region and internationally have not used their access to mass audiences to work sufficiently for children's rights and other humanitarian issues. It was agreed that Arab individuals and institutions should be actively involved in launching public international information campaigns to promote values of tolerance and respect for international conventions on protection of children, women and civilians in conflict situations. This should parallel domestic efforts to promote a new Arab attitude to the enforcement of international conventions and other means of protecting children. It was suggested that a global mass media network be launched to provide politically impartial broadcasting that emphasizes humanism instead of particular ideologies or commercial interests.

5.1 The role of the media: recommendations

- UNICEF, NGOs, Governments and concerned specialists are asked to continuously provide media professionals with information that can be used to promote the well-being of children. This effort should comprise at least four separate components:

    - provide information, facilities and training to mass media personnel, in order to stimulate their interest in, and awareness of, child rights issues, and to improve their ability to cover such issues in an accurate manner;

    - offer annual prizes, awards or other incentives to encourage and reward good media coverage of child rights;

    - produce good quality, conveniently accessible information by the United Nations family and other national and international bodies, for easy use by the media, especially on emerging issues such as child soldiers;

    - develop a more professional and competitive information marketing strategy aimed at the mass media by United Nations and international and national agencies, in order to generate more effective media coverage of child rights issues around the world.

- Train NGOs and other community groups in ways of using the mass media to promote child rights issues.

- NGOs in the Arab world are requested to establish one or more media watch groups that would routinely monitor and rate the performance of national, regional and international media in four specific areas:

    - their coverage of issues relating to the rights of children, women, civilians and ethnic and religious minorities in times of conflict and peace;

    - their role in reporting and monitoring violations of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international conventions relating to the protection of children, women and other civilians;

  - their depiction of children, with particular attention to their manipulation of children for political ends;

  - their treatment of violence and its impacts on children, including their depiction of children and women in times of war.

- Media organizations are requested to provide children with unfettered access to the media so that they may present their views without being manipulated. Governments, NGOs and international organizations are asked to lobby for greater participation of children in the media.

- Mass media institutions in the Arab world are requested to consult with educators so as to use the media to deliver emergency basic education programming when the normal education system ceases to function due to warfare.

Annex III

STATEMENT OF THE THIRD REGIONAL CONSULTATION ON THE IMPACT OF ARMED CONFLICT ON CHILDREN IN WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA

I. PATTERNS AND UNDERLYING CAUSES OF ARMED CONFLICTS IN WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA

Large areas of West and Central Africa have become boiling cauldrons of tension and conflict. Development in countries such as Chad, the Congo, the Gambia, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Zaire have been stymied by economic, political and social crises for periods lasting as long as 10 years. Many of these countries are in situations of armed conflict and prolonged insecurity.

The vestiges of colonialism and persistent economic, social and political crises have greatly contributed to the disintegration of public order. The collapse of functional Governments in many countries of the region, the personalization of power and leadership and the manipulation of ethnicity and religion to serve personal or narrow group interests have fomented inequalities, grievances and conflict.

"Total war" is increasingly being waged within national boundaries. Nothing is spared in the quest for power and control - not crops, nor women, children, schools, health-care facilities or places of worship. Unbridled attacks on civilians and rural communities have provoked mass flights and displacement of entire populations in search of ephemeral sanctuaries within and outside national borders. Children and women constitute the overwhelming majority among the uprooted millions in the subregion and other trouble spots in Africa. These wars are characterized by the indiscriminate destruction of lives and property and unprecedented numbers of human rights violations against children and women. Increasingly, children have become both targets and perpetrators of violence and atrocities.

Many Governments have contributed to the increasing militarization of society and the creation of a culture of violence and insecurity, where banditry and pillage have become the norm. Military expenditure within the region is glaringly disproportionate to spending on education, health or social development. In many conflict theatres Governments and opposition forces have resorted to the use of mercenaries.

Recommendations

Root causes of conflicts in West and Central Africa

1. African regional, subregional and national research institutions, associations and networks, such as CODESRIA, the African Association of Political Science, and others, should intensify their efforts to systematically assess the patterns and causes of conflict, and provide data on their impact on women and children.

2. Civil society organizations at the national, regional and subregional levels, should establish mechanisms to ensure a due process of accountability for those who have violated the rights of women and children in conflict situations.

3. National dialogues, involving the military and civil society, should be organized in all African countries with a view to changing the attitudes of the military and to enlisting their support for democracy, good governance and conflict prevention. This should be reinforced through training in these areas, particularly in human rights and with specific reference to the protection of women and children in times of war and peace.

4. The concept of children as a zone of peace must be defended vigorously. Children must be made untouchable and inviolate, and active measures must be taken to ensure this, even during the height of armed conflicts.

Child rights

5. As the first subregion (consisting of 23 countries) to have ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Governments in West and Central Africa are called upon to implement its provisions and to ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. This is to be undertaken with the full support of UNICEF, UNIFEM, NGOs and civil society organizations.

6. Regional organizations and the international community must collaborate to censure Governments and armed groups that flout the standards of the Conventions. Remedies for violations should also be considered.

7. All national and grass-roots NGOs are urged to widely disseminate the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women to create an enabling environment for child rights activities. Networks of professionals such as paediatricians, lawyers and educators are also encouraged to raise the issues of children and war in all their work.

8. The United Nations, the international community and Africa's regional and subregional organizations must act to declare the targeting of children and their recruitment as soldiers as war crimes and crimes against humanity.

9. Children have the right to help shape their own lives. They have the right to their own beliefs and to express them, and to participate in decisions affecting their lives. Children must be an integral part of the design and implementation of programmes and strategies directed towards their care.

Arms trade, shipment and mercenaries

10. The United Nations is called upon to ensure the effective enforcement of a total ban on arms shipments to conflict areas in Africa and work for a total ban on the production, stockpiling, and export of anti-personnel land-mines.

11. International, regional and national institutions are urged to strengthen their advocacy and monitoring functions in this regard with a focus on the most vulnerable countries as a priority.

12. Governments and armed opposition groups who engage mercenaries must cease forthwith this practice. In this regard, the OAU Convention on the Elimination of Mercenaries should be strictly enforced.

13. Africa's civil society organizations, at the regional, subregional and national levels are urged to establish networks and mechanisms to systematically monitor, publicize and disseminate findings about the transfer and supply of arms to the various conflict areas in Africa.

Other general recommendations

14. The flexible interpretation of the principle of "non-interference" in the internal affairs of member States - which has enabled the OAU to undertake creative initiatives in peace-building and resolution - should be strengthened to reflect the dynamism of African common bonds and traditional norms of shared responsibility for the welfare of every member of the community, be it intra- or across borders.

15. The Organization of Africa Unity, the Economic Commission for Africa and subregional bodies such as the Economic Commission for West African States must develop a more proactive capacity and role in conflict prevention, management and resolution.

16. African countries, with the support of international partners, must make education for peace and tolerance an integral part of all levels of the formal education system. National NGOs must also strengthen their efforts in fostering informal and non-formal education for reconciliation and development.

17. Chairperson Graça Machel is called upon to lead a delegation of eminent African women leaders, and children affected by armed conflicts, to address the 1996 Summit of the heads of State and Government of the OAU to underscore the need for decisive and urgent action to mitigate the impact of conflict on women and children.

II. VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ABUSE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Gender violence has become a systematic weapon of war and repression. The use of rape as an instrument of war and social destruction is a phenomenon which the late twentieth century can call its own, and Africa is no exception. In conflict situations, parents, and especially mothers, are critically important to a child's survival and development.

Motherhood is only one aspect of women's lives. Women are also workers, heads of household, leaders, activists, sisters, daughters, wives and widows. Women are essential to the survival of their families and communities, and have economic, reproductive and mental health needs that extend well beyond their role as mothers.

In situations of armed conflict, and even in times of peace, displaced and refugee women and girls have special reproductive, maternal health care and mental health counselling needs that are related to the effects of rape and sexual abuse, pregnancy and childbirth complications, poor sanitation conditions in camps, and the loss of traditional community supports. Health education, preventive care and counselling are especially important for women and girls who have been raped, who have undergone female genital mutilation or have been forced into prostitution and are more vulnerable to sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS.

Recommendations

18. Africa's civil society organizations at the regional, subregional and national levels are called upon to document the particular nature and consequences of violence against women, including sexual violence, in situations of conflict and peace. They are called upon to further document the various linkages between warfare, culture of violence, domestic violence and sexual violence against women and children.

19. Child advocacy organizations must develop systematic media campaigns to reinforce the human rights of women and girls and to help reverse negative socialization processes.

20. Child advocacy organizations are called upon to develop gender sensitization training for educators, judicial authorities, the police and army.

21. Humanitarian and relief agencies are urged to develop gender sensitive responses for the care and protection of women and girls in conflict situations, including the provision of appropriate health services and trauma counselling for victims of violence.

22. The United Nations is called upon to declare rape as a weapon of war and a crime against humanity, and to work with national entities to ensure the strict enforcement of this standard.

23. Legislation pertaining to rape and sexual assault is applicable regardless of the victim's age. The defilement, rape or sexual assault of a girl less than 14 years of age shall incur no lesser punishable charge, as is the case in some West and Central African countries.

24. Africa's regional and subregional organizations must ensure the active involvement of women in conflict prevention, peacemaking, and conflict resolution.

III. CHILD SOLDIERS

The use of children as weapons of war is an affront to humanity. In West and Central Africa, children as young as 8 and 10 years of age have been forcibly recruited, coerced or induced to become combatants. Although exact figures are unavailable, the estimated number of 20,000-50,000 child combatants often cited is considered an underestimate.

Approximately 90 per cent of all child soldiers are boys. Survival, self-esteem, revenge of the death of family members, peer group pressure and coercion by adults and family members are some of the factors compelling children to participate in the wars in West and Central Africa.

The demobilization of child soldiers has been constrained for a variety of reasons, including the lack of political will on the part of military leaders; the absence of sanctions against recruitment; weak national demobilization structures; and the social disintegration of families and communities.

There is an urgent need to develop guidelines for the psychological recovery and social reintegration of child soldiers. Several issues relating to programming were emphasized: (1) children have experienced conflict both as perpetrators and victims of violence; (2) communities and others traumatized by war may perceive demobilization and reintegration programmes as "rewards" to combatants; (3) beneficiaries often have heightened expectations of programmes and services; (4) donors often have a weak understanding of the funding requirements; (5) psychological recovery and improved socio-economic conditions require sustained and long-term interventions; (6) few employment, vocational or educational opportunities may exist in war-torn communities.

Programme responses must be developed in the best interest of the child along the continuum: the prevention of children's participation in armed conflicts, disarmament and demobilization, interim care, family reunification and social reintegration.

Recommendations

25. All warring parties, government and non-State, to conflicts are urged to demobilize all child soldiers under the age of 18 immediately.

26. International and national civil society organizations and human rights groups should develop systems for exposing violators of child rights and other human rights conventions in times of war. Efforts should be made to ensure that the conscription age, limited to 18 years, is adhered to at all times.

27. Governments should ban or censor war films and prohibit the sale of war games and toys in war-torn countries.

28. While clinical and medical treatment of war-affected and traumatized children can be effective, field experience has demonstrated that family and community-centred approaches to psychological recovery and social reintegration are significantly more effective and should be developed.

29. Psycho-social support and other relevant assistance should also be made available to other victims such as institutionalized children, disabled children, and those suffering from acute mental and psychological distress.

30. The war trauma college in Liberia should be strengthened so that it can serve as a regional training and research centre in West and Central Africa.

IV. PREVENTING ARMED CONFLICT AND MITIGATING ITS IMPACT ON CHILDREN AND WOMEN

The most compelling challenge facing Africans today is to stop the wars that have devastated entire nations, communities, and families. Africans must take leadership in fulfilling their moral obligation to protect and care for those rendered most vulnerable by armed conflicts. They need to shatter the political inertia that has impeded the care and protection of civilians, and especially children and women. The fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations signals an important juncture to develop an integrated and comprehensive approach to preventive development. Towards this end, the capacity of organizations at regional, subregional and national levels should be strengthened in the areas of conflict prevention and preventive diplomacy.

This will require, in the first instance, strategies that address the root causes of conflict and promote sustainable human development. Democratization, good governance and a functional civil society are essential for the protection of human rights. Preventive strategies that respond to the systemic economic crises and environmental degradation affecting many countries in conflict or on the verge of conflict are essential. African Governments must reconsider the consequent changing role of the military in "internal" conflicts as well as ways in which the military can be used to protect civilians and promote conflict resolution. Training in human rights and humanitarian law and other preparedness measures are also important at all levels of Government and civil society.

Africans must build upon local traditions of conflict prevention, peacemaking, peace-keeping and conflict resolution and involve women centrally in these efforts. The family is an important social, economic, and cultural institution where healthy attitudes can be fostered. The role of the African family in promoting education for peace and reconciliation must be strengthened in conjunction with other informal and non-formal educational approaches that promote reconciliation and harmony.

Recommendations

31. The OAU is urged to collaborate with regional and subregional and national NGOs and governmental entities to develop its preparedness measures and early warning systems (EWS). Towards this end, a practical "how-to kit" should be developed for use by Governments, agencies and non-governmental organizations.

32. The OAU is urged to further systemize the collection and dissemination of all relevant information pertaining to emergency and conflict situations.

33. African research institutions are urged to study the application of indigenous and traditional mechanisms of conflict resolution to contemporary situations of conflict.

34. The OAU is urged to convene a meeting of army chiefs of staff to discuss preparedness measures and participation in an African regional rapid reaction force. Member States are urged to maintain specially trained and equipped contingents to participate in the Rapid Reaction Force.

35. Human rights and child advocacy organizations at the national level are urged to establish truth commissions at national, regional and district levels to document the incidence and extent of abuse of women and children in conflict situations.

36. Governments, in cooperation with organizations of civil society, are urged to adopt measures that focus on the implementation of humanitarian law and that strengthen the judicial structures of countries in conflict and post-conflict situations.

37. The United Nations is called upon to allocate increased resources to preventive development strategies that address the root causes of conflict.

V. SELECTED INITIATIVES

At the Consultation, participants representing a diverse range of NGOs, agencies and civil society identified three main areas for further discussion. A session was added to the programme agenda for bilateral discussions to agree upon a plan of action in the following areas:

1. The promotion of the rights of the child in situations of armed conflict

To promote child rights advocacy and networking at the national and regional levels, as well as the application and monitoring of international standards at the national level.

2. Regional networking in the area of trauma counselling for children affected by armed conflicts

To propose ways and means to establish and operationalize an effective network system in the area of trauma counselling in the West and Central African subregion to ensure the protection and well-being of children and women in situations of armed conflict.

3. National truth commissions for reconciliation

To explore the potential of national truth commissions (NTCs) as a mechanism at the national level to help facilitate social reintegration and reconciliation. The working group considered various strategies to document human rights violations, as well as mechanisms of recourse (including legal action, cultural sanction, pardon or clemency) by Governments, human rights organizations, civil society, and other interested persons.

ANNEXES TO THE STATEMENT OF THE THIRD REGIONAL CONSULTATION

I. EXTRAPLENARY DISCUSSIONS

Group One: IMPUNITY: Methods for publicizing/documenting crimes against children and women caught in conflict situations

How to establish national truth commissions by national civil society organizations?

Chairperson: Ms. Mary Okumu, Forum for African Voluntary Development (FAVDO), Senegal.

The Consultation recommended further discussion of the potential of national truth commissions (NTCs) as a mechanism at the national level to help facilitate social reintegration and reconciliation. The working group noted the existence of 16 national truth commissions (NTCs) worldwide in countries such as Argentina, Burundi, El Salvador, South Africa, Uganda and Viet Nam. The Ugandans' experience was considered an important model. They have sought to ensure justice for victims, and facilitate healing, reconciliation, and the reconstruction of affected families, communities and nations. The working group considered various strategies to document human rights violations, as well as mechanisms of recourse (including legal action, cultural sanction, pardon or clemency) by Governments, human rights organizations, civil society, and other interested persons.

The working group noted both the importance of government support for the NTC process and concern for situations in which members of Government were implicated in human rights violations. The group recommended that non-governmental organizations with broad popular support and experience with human rights work should take leadership of an independent process supported by aggrieved families/communities, civic organizations, NGOs and interested individuals.

The group stressed the need for NTCs to reassert the fundamental importance and respect for the sanctity of human life, and to establish ethical, moral, legal and political accountability of leaders and civil society more broadly. They should emphasize alternatives to retribution that build on African traditions of forgiveness and reconciliation.

Recommendations

Mechanisms for national truth commissions:

- NTCs should provide strong sanctions inspired by and drawn from African traditions (including the practice of publicly shaming violators and the barring from public office);

- NGOs and others are encouraged to develop mechanisms to help prevent crimes and abuses against children;

- NTCs should also facilitate the rehabilitation of violators;

included as data on child rights abuses. A clearing house to handle research results, case-studies and models of project interventions should also be provided.

2. Structure/mechanism

The structure should include a children's national network (CNN) for each country and a children's regional network (CRN) to coordinate the exchange of information. Some of the effective tools that could be used are newsletters, direct exchange visits and meetings, which could be conducted as frequently as necessary on the national level (CNN) and at least once a year on the regional level (CRN).

3. What-who-when modalities for action

As an immediate need, a training institute for paraprofessionals to deal with trauma among war-affected children must be set up in the francophone countries, using and improving on the Liberian model for the rehabilitation of child soldiers. Governments and professional organizations should get together to do this now.

Trauma prevention and treatment materials should be prepared and ways must be found to include them in school curricula as well as community-based rehabilitation activities. Key areas to cover in this respect are needs of child soldiers, other traumatized children and women, and women and children who have suffered physical and psychological abuse.

A referral centre for the treatment of trauma must be provided for. It must focus on community-based measures, using holistic approaches at all times and linked to other ongoing rehabilitation activities in the communities.

II. STATEMENT BY THE UNION OF AFRICAN PAEDIATRIC SOCIETIES AND ASSOCIATIONS

The Union of African Paediatric Societies and Associations (Dakar) will address the health and human rights impact of war on children in Africa and plans to conduct a pre-Congress workshop on Children and War at the time of its next African Congress scheduled for Kampala, Uganda, in November 1996.

This effort will be made in coordination with the International Paediatric Association which, at its international congress in Cairo in September 1995, addressed issues of children and war and passed resolutions on these issues.

Dr. Ihsan Dogramau (Turkey), Hon. President;

Dr. Gavin Arneil (Glasgow), President;

Dr. Robert Haggerty (Rochester, NY, USA), Executive Director;

Dr. Jane Schaller (Boston, USA), Consultant-children and war.

III. STATEMENT BY CHILDREN PARTICIPANTS FROM LIBERIA

We are extremely grateful to UNICEF, Mrs. Graça Machel and her study team for permitting us to share our views, proposals, dilemmas and dreams with this august body. We are also grateful that we can join our eastern, southern, and northern African brothers and sisters in identifying the problems affecting us.

The fact that we have been ill-treated is strange in no society. In making our rights known, we must not forget the rights also of our mothers, who out of their diligent efforts have brought us into this world, not with the idea of us joining them to suffer, but that we (make) the betterment in changing the lives of both us and them. But we have both suffered the hardships of wars, namely, hunger, trauma, malnutrition, death, etc.

We noticed the deep emotions expressed by each and every one of you after you had heard our experiences. But we are concerned not only with the showing of emotions, but also with the energizing of those emotions to "excuvate" (exculpate?) those same happenings that we consider nightmares.

The issues for which we require immediate action are:

1.	Education	which will adequately prepare us to continue the good work that a few of you have started;
2.	Decision-making	that we partake in decisions governing our families, countries and the world in general;
3.	Rights emphasis	that our rights be made known and strict measures taken against violators;
4.	Peace promotion	that peace be promoted within every country, namely, with armed conflict or not;
5.	Development	the international community, the United Nations and the world in general develop structures that will promote the health and education of both women and children;
6.	Zones of peace	we noticed also that only a few children engaged in peaceful programmes and serve as peacemakers, e.g. Liberia's Student Palava management committee.

With all the above-mentioned points taken into consideration, children of countries engaged in armed conflict will be able to talk like children, think like children, engage in child play instead of wars and will not be left with the responsibility of finding their own food or waiting and thinking all day about whether daddy or mummy will bring food home or whether the night will be spent without an attack from armed robbers.

It is our fervent hope that with the Almighty on your side, our petitions will be granted to make us happy children, who are needed to build a better world tomorrow.

Annex IV

STATEMENT ADOPTED BY THE WORLD CONFERENCE ON RELIGION AND PEACE

CHILDREN AND VIOLENT CONFLICT

For countless children there is no peace, only terror. Caught in violent conflicts, they are enduring almost unimaginable suffering. Children are losing life, wholeness, home, family, opportunity, and hope. Their innocence and openness, which call us to cherish and protect them, leave children especially vulnerable to evil. Learnt hatreds, fears, and enmities are planting in children the seeds of future conflict.

In an unspeakable perversion of innocence, more and more children are being drawn as soldiers into violence they are too young to resist and whose consequences they cannot imagine. This assault on their childhood is intolerable, our failure to respond a betrayal, our silence complicity.

Our common voice cries out in anguish and protest.

Each of our religious traditions affirms the sanctity and promise of the child. If we fail to protect our children, we deny our humanity, risk our future, and betray our beliefs. We declare that it can be otherwise. Together we must find the will to heal and share our world so that our children will be safe to grow to the fullness of life.

The legion of low-intensity conflicts; guerrilla wars; rebellions; revolutions; struggles between communal, ethnic and religious groups; and the systemic violence which fuels them must be overcome. Their devastation disproportionately afflicts our children,

We speak hereby to the United Nations, heads of State and Government, to the leaders of civil and political movements, to our religious communities, and to all, throughout the world, who have held a child in love, with joy for its life, with tears for its pain.

Confident of the goodness and commitment of countless women and men around the world to care for children,

WE CALL UPON all parties, however different their roles, in armed conflicts - States' armies and militias, revolutionary parties and peoples' movements, United Nations forces - to conduct themselves in accordance with the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, notably article 38, and other relevant provisions of international law regarding the safety and well-being of children.

WE FURTHER CALL UPON

(1) The United Nations system, in particular UNICEF, and regional multilateral organizations to

- Encourage States to ratify and implement the Convention on the Rights of the Child and to monitor the same.

- Facilitate the approval and implementation of the draft optional protocol on armed conflict of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, regarding child soldiers.

- Establish an international mechanism to monitor the compliance of non-State parties with the protection of children as set forth by the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other relevant provisions of international law.

- Evaluate sanctions based on an assessment of their impact on children and adjust their implementation to assure children are not further victimized.

- Coordinate all responses to armed conflict within the United Nations system to maximize the protection of children.

- Urge the General Assembly to establish a permanent subsidiary judicial organ to bring to trial and justice all State and non-State actors involved in armed conflict that violate the laws and customs of war relating to children and in particular article 38 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Optional Protocol on armed conflict to the Convention as and when it is in force.

(2) State Governments to

- Ratify and implement the Convention on the Rights of the Child and to withdraw all reservations regarding the Convention and bring national laws into conformity with it.

- Adopt the optional protocol on armed conflict of the Convention on the Rights of the Child which sets forth that States parties shall take all feasible measures to ensure that persons who have not attained the age of 18 years shall not take part in armed conflicts.

- Halt the production, sale or purchase, and use of weapons that inflict indiscriminate harm on children, particularly land-mines.

- Establish a ministry or department charged with safeguarding the welfare of children, where such does not exist.

(3) People's movements and other groups seeking political change to

Adhere to humane and internationally established norms in the pursuit of morally defensible goals, so as not to compromise the integrity and moral legitimacy of their struggles. Develop internal standards of discipline and enforcement procedures that respect human rights and values and which are harmonious with the model of society to which they are aspiring. Ensure the protection and care for all children in conflict zones and refugee centres. Forswear the impressment or induction of children under 18 years of age into military or military-support activities.

(4) Religious and civic leaders to

Work with where they exist and initiate where needed National Committees on the Rights of the Child, consisting of experts of high moral character and recognized competence, to monitor and make public the compliance of their Governments with the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

(5) The media in its multiple forms to

- Educate the public on the needs of children, particularly those caught in armed conflict.

- Critically examine their own sensationalization of violence in both the reporting of news and in entertainment.

- Conduct interviews and reports on children in such ways as to not compound their trauma.

(6) Men and women of goodwill and NGOs operating around the world to

- Take initiatives to assist children exposed to violence and conflict.

- Advocate for and lend support to civil and political efforts designed to save, protect, and care for children in situations of conflict.

- Support calls for assistance to children in areas of conflict.

- Listen and learn from children who have been victims of violent conflict and enable their appropriate participation in programmes that are relevant to the protection of children in such situations.

- Translate human rights language in understandable terms, for example, using stories and the language of local traditions and customs.

- Assist in building a climate of moral concern and community care in which children can survive and flourish.

(7) Religious communities to

- Re-examine their tradition's teaching regarding the child and, in particular, discern its meaning as it relates to the child soldier.

- Educate their adherents and members to the tragedy and special needs of children in armed conflicts; teach peace and peacemaking, respect and acceptance of "the other", and appreciation for diversity.

- Pursue and support advocacy regarding the critical considerations of children.

- Cooperate with the United Nations and UNICEF in disseminating information on the needs of children.

- Exert high-profile, non-governmental leadership in monitoring international standards for the protection of children.

- Promote and engage in humanitarian actions to assist children in need.

- Seek to protect the child - especially the girl child - from sexual abuse in situations of violent conflict.

- Ensure that the integrity of the beliefs of victims of war can be safeguarded in adoption practices, the care of refugees, and the delivery of other forms of humanitarian assistance.

- Assist victims in their efforts to sustain their religious practice.

- Promote tolerance, respect, and understanding for people of other faiths in order to minimize conflict between religious bodies.

- Promote and engage in multireligious actions to assist children in need.

(8) World Conference on Religion and Peace (WCRP) to

- Expand its work regarding children in order to support, enable and facilitate all of the above.

- Initiate multireligious cooperation in order to assist the child victims of violent conflicts, including refugees and orphans.

- Encourage its constituencies to join the anti-land-mine campaign.

- Pursue current efforts in continuity with the WCRP 1990 Princeton Declaration of World Religious Leaders, "The World's Religions for the World's Children".